



Clay Geerdes **COMIX WAVE 147**
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GRENDAL TALES 5 is out from Dark Horse. Edited by Di Schutz, a fellow vet of the old **Telegraph Wire**.

Check out the showing of artwork by Bruce N. Duncan and friends at the Berkeley Store Gallery. Through March 12, 1994. 2295 Shattuck in Berkeley.

A copy of **SHATTERED LEGACY 19** is \$2.75 pp from Jason Dube, 1226 Almondwood Drive, Antioch, CA 94509.

BEZANGO is \$1.50 or trade from Steve Willis, POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

When are they going to get hip and do talk shows in period costume. Let's see Donahue interview Plato, Moses lay down the law to Geraldo, Cleopatra in a one on one with Madonna on Oprah. Enough of this Bobblitry.

A note to teenage gangs with concentration camp paranoia. Hey, guys, ever consider that any Friday night, "They" could simply lock up the mall with all of you inside? Why bother to build camps when America is cluttered with malls and stadia and convention centers?

In 1987, a British band called Chaotic Discord put out a record entitled **Goat Fuckin' Virgin Killerz From Hell**. Nice boys from good families, I'm sure. But what if one of them was your son? Oh, hi, and this is my son's latest album..uh-huh.

Several cartoonists were given the space to react to PC in the January 17th issue of **THE NATION**, an Eastern political hype sheet. Among them was Mort "Beetle Bailey" Walker who has given in to feminist criticism of late. My inclination would have been to have the General wearing a pair of horse blinders when his secretary passed through the office or to say "Fuck you!" as Crumb did in one of his more poignant strips, but Walker has toned down his strip. What I found of most interest in his short commentary, however, was this statement: "I am chairman of the group that is building the International Museum of Cartoon Art in Boca Raton, Florida, and we are worried about exhibiting these underground comics. They are mostly pornographic and may not be fit for a family museum [48]."

Pornography in underground comix? Surely you jest, Mort. Did I miss something? When I think of pornography, I think of **Ms.** Magazine which capitalizes on the subject all the time. See the current issue. Pornography is designed to get you up and off and the best of it does just that. What happens when you read the stories done by Crumb in underground comix [and you know Walker is not talking about **GOOGIEWAUMER** here] is you either laugh at the absurdity of his personal fantasies or you are disgusted by his blatant nastiness; in either case, you neither get up or off, hence it doesn't qualify as pornographic. I always wondered why someone didn't just come out with it, call it like it is. **MODERN PORNOGRAPHIC FUNNIES**. Comics about doing it. Why euphemize? These days, those who want porn know where to find it and they don't go to the comic book store. They go to a porn theater or they rent an X-rated video.

Meanwhile, back in Boca Raton [which translates as Rat's Mouth], underground comic art is being censored because Mort Walker can't tell it from pornography [of which there is plenty in Florida above and below the counter]. Doesn't seem to bother museum curators in New York. I've heard Dana Crumb sold her **YUM YUM BOOK** art to a collector who is now offering it for sale for only \$300,000.

I don't follow Walker's logic anyway. One doesn't think of an art museum as a place for family outings, at least, I don't. Why not a separate room for adult material? The whole thing is such a joke. Can it be that Mort has never watched a Madonna concert or seen MTV. Has he never looked inside an issue of **SHADE** or **SPAWN** or [-choke!] **THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE**? Does he not know that all things previously underground have long been assimilated into overground comics for sale to anyone with a large allowance?

One of the grossest panels in the art of Robert Crumb is the one where Forky O'Donnell puts out a girl's eye with his fork at a lunch counter. I often wondered about that panel, then I read in a recent interview that Crumb couldn't see until he was about 6 years old. A nun found out his eyesight was bad when he couldn't read in class. Crumb was the middle kid in a family of five and I guess his parents just didn't notice. So I suspect Forky of getting belated symbolic revenge on his negligent mother. Crumb's preoccupation with eyes resulted in that story where Eggs Ackley saves the town from a couple of crows that are flying around stealing everyone's eyeballs.

Flea Market Paper Filler.

The heaviest turd ever shat weighed 76.037 pounds. It was dropped by Paul Bunyan in 1849.

Believe it or not! William Jefferson Clinton is the first man to be elected to the presidency of the United States while an article by a mistress describing the intimate details of his sexual technique was on sale all over the World. Gary Hart, an Earlier Democratic candidate, was dropped from the race just for having a woman sit on his knee! By this logic, one may expect the candidates in the 1996 election to pass out X-rated videos of themselves in action to all the major networks.

PRO/con 2 and WONDER CON

If you're a pro and you're interested in **PRO/con**, write and ask for details of this year's gathering at the Parc Oakland Hotel, April 20 & 21. **PRO/con 1** was successful last year, so it is happening again this year. **WONDER CON** is set for April 22-24. Guests include Berni Wrightson and Jim Valentino. Details from Bryan Unlenbrock, 2991 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 202, Berkeley, California 94705. [510] 644-1886. Fax [510] 644-1678.

FROM THE PANELS OF "CULTURAL JETLAG"...

CULTURE VULTURES

THEY'RE CUTE! THEY'RE CUDDLY!
 THEY PREY UPON THE CULTURALLY EFFETE!

PLEASE GIVE US A HOME!

FREE COMIC BOOKLET WITH EVERY PURCHASE!

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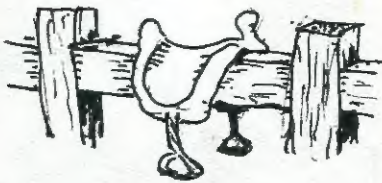
\$10 A PAIR!

The Supreme Court decided to allow 2 Live Crew to parody Roy Orbison's **Pretty Woman**. The Crew must now persuade lower courts of two elements essential to the fair use defense; that it had not taken any more of the original than necessary to make the point of the parody, and that the parody had not harmed the market for the original song or the potential market for new versions that Acuff-Rose may license.

A view of the love comics by a 12-year-old black girl living in Lafayette, Louisiana, in 1959:

The thing about **True Romance** stories was that they showed what the boys and girls were thinking, and when the girl was thinking that she liked the boy and that maybe he liked her too, he did. Sometimes she liked him and would think he didn't even notice her, and then it turned out that he was thinking about her. The boys were secretly in tune. This meant that other boys, real boys, could be thinking what you hoped they were thinking. Even if they weren't, when you read the comic you could make the real boy who was symbolized by the white, dark-haired boy in the book think things you wanted him to think. **True Romances** were great because they didn't waste time with all the other stuff boys might be thinking about other than you. **True Romances** were in tune with your secret thoughts like alien beings and God. The only drawback was that you had to buy a lot of them because the stories in previous issues did not materialize. There was always the chance that the stories in the next issue would actually turn up as your own.

--Thulani Davis
1959. New York: Grove, 1992,
pp. 137-8.



In return for my labor, I received forty dollars a month, the use of my horses, food and the ground upon which I slept. I was also expected to abide by trail law and the first rule that had been adopted by the Wyoming Cattlemen's Association was that anyone riding with the roundup was not, contrary to popular myth, permitted to carry a pistol. For some reason a Winchester rifle packed snugly into a sheath and attached to a saddle did not fall under this rule and you could, and most of us did, throw a six-shooter in your bedroll. This practice was allowed as long as you kept the weapon there. But putting one on the hip was definitely out and the breaking of this rule was sufficient cause for immediate dismissal. This restriction came about because of many painful experiences wherein cowboys grated against each other's nerves, got jumpy and felt the need to throw a few shots at their compadres. It was a rule that saved everybody from many complicated and potentially fatal situations and, besides, allowed the ranch not to lose any time, money or personnel.

Tim McCoy Remembers the West. 1977.

The San Francisco **EXAMINER** has started a new Sunday magazine. The first issue came out March 6, 1994 with Winona Ryder sitting on the cover. The second issue has a model on her knees in her slip on the cover. What is the message here? One that is so blatant, it is almost unconscious. We are so accustomed to seeing women used as products by capitalism, we take it for granted. Oh, she's *not* a product? Then what IS the message of a woman on her knees in front of the reader? I submit that it is the same one we get from seeing a woman in bed in a department store ad. If the bed is the product, what is that woman doing in it? I doubt that there are any readers around who need to be shown how to lie in bed.

No, the medium is still the message. The lead article in the March 13 issue of **EXAMINER** mag is "Baby dolls and bad girls: why the new trends defy the taste police." Taste police? Sounds salacious, but we know what this woman writer is talking about. We also know what the article is all about. It's about selling sexy underwear and accessories to secretaries who aspire to marry up in the course of successful careers. The mag is nothing but advertising for wine and yuppie doodads illustrated with standard sexist poses, most of them designed to make a mockery of women. What's a new trend? That's fashionspeak meaning we have to get the suckers to throw out the clothes they are wearing and buy the ones we have just gotten back from our Pacific rim and Mexican sweatshops.

I find it very interesting that the feminists who attack pornography are silent about mags like **EXAMINER**. The pose of the model on the cover of this mag is pornographic TO ME. If the idea was simply to display the product, "a Versace lavender slip-dress," a manniken could have been used or they could have tossed the damned thing on a dresser top.

The hypocrisy inherent here is overbearing. The article is a mockery of an exposé. "It's much more exciting to photograph pretty girls scantily dressed than dermatologists in lab coats [p. 10]." "Abuse is a strong aphrodisiac; it almost feels like love [10]." Tell this to a rape victim. What's being hyped in this fashion spread is not new at all; it's reactionary as hell! Here are grown women dressed up like little school girls in short dresses, anklets and black shoes [p. 17]. Another Lolita is pouting at the reader with her hands over her crotch as she tries to look as ingénue as possible [14]. The model on p. 22 has her top unbuttoned all the way, just sitting there waiting. For what? For whom? In an article about "virtual surfin'" a man is carrying two smaller women toward the reader. The Japanese model in his left arm is wearing a spandex bodysuit so tight the outer lips of her vagina are delineated. What is the message given by this guy carrying these women around in the center of this magazine? A little threesome coming up? To me, this is dishonest porn, a sham. Buy a mag like **HUSTLER** and it is what it is. It doesn't pretend to be a city magazine, to have a social conscience; what am I getting from **EXAMINER** but a lot of fuck me poses and disclaiming bullshit about fashion trends? If you follow business trends, you know that most of the department stores that advertise in this mag are bankrupt; well, to me they are morally bankrupt as well. What harm do they do? For one thing they use anorexic models to make normal people feel insecure about their bodies. The fashion message is always a lie. It says if you buy this or that crap and spread it on your face, you'll look like this model. It says if you buy your fiancée or wife this slip-dress, she will look like the model. It says material things, products, will do it for you. And they won't. Buying is buying and it's fun, but it will not give you a nickel's worth of meaning in the long run.



What happens to those anorexic models? Read the biography of Edie Sedgwick. What happens to these expensive adzines like **IMAGE** and **EXAMINER**? They fold when the advertisers feel they are not bringing in the suckers. Years ago when I was freelancing, I tried to sell to **CALIFORNIA LIVING**. I learned that every article had to have a product tie-in, had to glean some advertising. I was a babe in the woods back then. I thought it all had to do with journalism, with a good story, with quality photography. Ha!

There is even an article in **EXAMINER** called **HOW AMERICA'S SCHOOLS CHEAT GIRLS!** And this third-hand version of **WOMEN'S WEAR DAILY** doesn't cheat them? Well, get this: a woman on her knees in front of the reader on the cover is a woman on her knees, not standing on her feet, not doing her own thing, not achieving anything as a result of her intelligence and skill, not being her own person, not providing a role model for her sisters--she's a woman on her knees and she has made no progress at all toward self-actualization. **EXAMINER** is printing pictures of grown women dressed up like little girls to titillate a male target market into buying the useless products they are associated with. Sex sells all right. It sells out the women who are being misused in this manner.



It was this night guarding that served as the inspiration for the idea of the **singing cowboy**. It didn't take much to spook the cattle, which were about half wild anyway. If a man rode up quickly to the herd at night and stopped to light a cigarette, the flash of the match might spook them and they'd be off and gone. Or if a horse shook himself, the sound of the saddle leather at night practically jarred your teeth loose, and that, too, would spook the beef. In order to keep the beeves from getting edgy, we'd sing as we rode the night circle. The cattle heard our voices, got to know them, started becoming accustomed to the singing and any further, unusual sound would hopefully not cause them undue concern. Cattle, besides being spookable, are also pretty dumb. Let them eat, don't cause them any bother and they're fine.

Tim McCoy Remembers the West. 1977.



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THE LOWER DEPTHS AND SINKING

What's okay for the kiddies these days. Well, I decided to take a look at an issue of Clive Barker's **PINHEAD**. This is put out as an Epic comic, but Epic is just a division of Marvel, so it's a Marvel comic. I picked up the 5th issue. There is no adults only disclaimer on the cover, nothing to warn the unwary parent that the product may not be suitable for a kid reader. Now, I don't know if kids even read comic books anymore. I doubt that most can be torn away from the joy stick long enough to read anything, so perhaps all comics are now assumed to have an adult readership and I am the anachronism. Whatever. I go on. The splash for this issue of Pinhead shows a big blue humanoid kissing a prone naked redheaded woman. An erect sword dominates the center of the drawing in case you failed to get the message. In panel two the woman tells the blue creature to her let "feel the gods within" him, and by panel two she is up and putting on her top. A few panels later the woman is standing and telling the blue one that his "strength has sated" her as no one else's could. In other words, he was great in the sack. This scene would have meant so much to be at the age of eight. I would have understood all the subtleties.

The woman appears to be a normal human, yet she is having sex with a freak with six little swords stuck in his bald head. Kind of makes you wonder, huh? Now this woman who was praising the blue one's power on page three is saying she would like to see "an ending of strength...of power" on page six, which would be a contradiction anywhere but in this pseudo-fantasy world. On page eight, a giant pink creature punches a woman in the breast with his right hand and knocks her down. She is a servant to the redhaired woman. When she tries to help the girl, the pink creature says "move aside,

whore." Tsk! Tsk! And you thought the kids learned that kind of talk from rap CDs. A page or two later and a child is drugged and throw into a flaming pit as a human sacrifice. A page or two pass and the pink creature smashes a blacksmith in the jaw with a stone hammer and burns him to death. A moment later the redhead attacks her blue seducer with a knife. A skeleton calls her a slut and falls on her pushing her into a fire where she burns to death. She's called a priestess, of course, but she's a woman, and as she burns in the flames the skeleton rips out her heart. The death of the priestess pisses the blue guy off and he chops off the left arm of the pink guy. In case your old eyes are getting a little weak, the character is turned toward you and blown up to half page size so you can revel in the bloody gore that exudes from the shoulder and arm socket. This is followed by a splash page with the blue pinhead smashing his right fist through the body of the pink demon. The episode ends with a pinhead holding a bloody bone as blood drips from his lips. The book is filled out with a few pin-ups tossed in for the gratification of the reader. One shows a pinhead carrying the corpse of a blonde woman--his lunch?

And people call the fantasies of Robert Crumb misogynistic! **PINHEAD** is just the latest in a long series of demonic manifestations that have appeared in straight comics since the revival of **CONAN** back in the early seventies. But Robert E. Howard was a pretty good story teller and when Roy Thomas translated his work into the early stories illustrated by Barry Windsor Smith the material retained its interest for me. **PINHEAD** is a dreadful imitation of an imitation with some of the worst writing I've ever suffered on the comic page. Who is editing this stuff? Where is Spelcheck?

I've always felt sword and sorcery was a copout. You see a beautiful woman and she is suddenly torn to pieces only to turn into some weird beast and the idea is that she was simply enchanted, under some witch's spell, her form changed like that of the frog prince or the beast in Beauty and the Beast. What is manifest, however, is an attitude toward women, an anger toward them, a revenge motive. This is logical. Most comic books are aimed at adolescent boys and in the clutch of puberty women are strong desired and as strongly feared. A boy wants, but fears rejection, so he gets angry and seeks revenge against those girls he fears would reject him if he had the nerve to approach them. This complex of emotions underlies nearly all comic book fantasy. The woman is drawn perfectly. After all, she is the artist's fantasy first of all and only shared with others as an afterthought. The male allowed to approach her has to be more perfect than she is, a superbeing, a superhero, the opposite of the ordinary number-crunching nine-to-five reader. The frustrated reader would like to kill that beautiful redhead and rip out her heart, but he settles for a comic book and accepts symbolic gratification. This was always implied or inferred in comic book stories, but in **PINHEAD** nothing is latent, nothing subtle, nothing left to the imagination. That slashed arm is a blatant as John Wayne Bobbitt's dick. All of the male expressions in **PINHEAD** are angry and mean, all of them! The only soft expressions come from the women and there are only a few of these. I found nothing at all in this comic book that I could identify with, no character that even remotely represented me. My honest feeling when I finished with the book was: why would anyone want to publish this rot? My second reaction was anger at the publisher's cynicism in assuming this was appropriate subject matter for all ages when the only child shown in the story is thrown into a pit of flames and burned to death as a human sacrifice.

I wondered how long the Indians would sit still for all that nonsense in Barrie's **PETER PAN**. A middle school in Southampton, New York, cancelled it's production of **PETER PAN** because administrators decided the musical's portrayal of Indians was offensive to members of the Shinnecock tribe, whose reservation is on the town's border and whose children make up 9 % of the district's students. The kids are now rehearsing **THE WIZARD OF OZ**. Munchkins, take notice. A monarchical matriarchy ruled by Princess Ozma, Oz has it's own PC problems.

PENNY WISE BUT POUND FOOLISH

I was in a comic book store near El Cerrito the other day. I buy things there once in awhile. I'm a customer. There were some old comics in a box marked half off and I saw a couple of **MUTT AND JEFFS** so I decided to see what kind of person I was doing business with. I offered ten apiece for the books. Neither was in mint shape and both were slightly browning at the edges and I had seen these comics in that store for several years. At the same time I was already buying about \$30 worth of stuff, so would this dealer say "sure, ten sounds good," and keep a customer or would he weasel me for a few dollars more on a single sale that would cost him a lot of future sales. That has always amazed me about dealers. Those who have given me a break once in awhile have gotten my business for years. I never do any more business with those who nickel and dime me. Well, this guy weaseled me on those **MUTT AND JEFFS**. He said they were already half off. Half off of what? I know he didn't buy those books. They probably came in a box with a lot of other stuff that the store got for five or ten bucks and he's trying to hold out for a couple thousand per cent profit. I've been in this game too long. I worked in a comic book store on Telegraph Avenue back in 1973 and I watched what went on. I saw people paid pennies for books that later sold for hundreds of dollars. Most of the older books in comic book stores came from the attics and basements of naive people who had no idea of their value. A comic book dealer came along and offered to clean out that attic or basement for them and they gave him "those old magazines and stuff." None of the people in the business today are old enough to have bought any golden age comics off the rack. Their money has been made at the expense of people who didn't know the business.

This dealer tossed me away. He could have sold me the **MUTTS** and kept me as a customer, but he tried to squeeze that extra buck or two on a single sale and pissed the future down the drain. There are lots of stores, pal, and I can deal with any of them.

RABBITBOY 6 is \$1.52 pp from
 Bruce Stengl
 633 King St., #13
 Santa Rosa, CA 95404

It was **Slow Death 4** [1973] in which Richard Corben did a parody of **MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER**.

Mrs. Bruce Deam had the license plate **A PUSSY** for 20 years, then the DMV tried to recall it. She protested, arguing that she didn't know it had any other meaning. Mrs. Deam is a cat lover.

The most frequent crime in Berkeley? Bicycle theft.

COMIX PLUGOLA

"Hey, wouldn't you rather have a make-believe character in high office saying what's real than a real politician saying what's make believe?"

--Steve Willis
CRANIUM FRENZY 7

You can't keep a good cartoonist away from the drawing board. So it is with Steve Willis. Get the latest **CRANIUM FRENZY** for \$1 or trade from POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

And guess who wrote the script for the latest **INDIANA JONES** comic book? Lee Marrs. Lee came to California from Alabama via Washington DC back at the tail end of the sixties. Her **PUDGE GIRL BLIMP** series was published by Last Gasp and rejected by Ms. You can get **INDIANA JONES AND THE ARMS OF GOLD** from your local dealer.

Why is it that Jack Nicholson suddenly gets on the cover of a lot of magazines now that he's older and more demonic looking? Where were they when he was a young stud playing the dentist in the original **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**?

And why was Nancy Kerrigan interviewed at the academy awards? All those stars passing in review and the news people give time to someone who has yet to make a movie. What a joke!

J. R. Williams **CRAP 3** has a couple of good stories in it. I've spread a few of the panels around this page for you to sample. Jim started out doing parodies of **MAD**. His **SKINBOY** stuff from the early eighties established his style.

I finally figured out what CD-ROM is all about. Computer games for adults who were addicted to them as children. I saw a clip on **REAL SEX** about **Virtual Valerie**, a woman you can do anything to and with. A click of the mouse and there goes Val's bra. Another click and there go her panties. Click again and she moves her hand to her crotch. Clickety-click-click-click! While you sit there reading this stuff, there are grown men [and boys] out there clicking away. Val is programmed with lots of the right answers to the hacker's questions. One can only speculate about the fate of real women in a culture saturated with these games. Er--not tonight, dear, I'm got to finish this program.



J. R. Williams' latest minicomic [yes, he still enjoys the form, so fuck off you 7x9ers.] is **DIE LAUGHING**. Send an SASE to Starhead, POB 30044, Seattle, WA 98103, and they will send you a listing of all their Williams' stuff, not to mention a lot of other folks!

No, Joe Bob Briggs has not been run over by a herd of horny steers. His latest **REPORT** is \$3 pp from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. When his column was missing from the Chronicle one Sunday, it provoked almost as big an outrage at the missing Orphan Annie strip of 1927. Fear not, Drive-In movies live on and as long as there is a ver running somewhere, someone will be watching something like **THE ATTACK OF THE GIANT MOMSERS** or **TWILIGHT OF THE SKUNK PEOPLE**. Video has guaranteed the survival of the sickest.

Stanley Mouse did the cover drawing for the Chronicle **DATE BOOK** for April 17-23, 1994. The reason? *The Fillmore Auditorium reopens in San Francisco* April 27, 1994. Oh, you didn't know it had closed? Whatsamatta you? Where you live, huh? Question is would Bill Graham have booked people like Queen Latifah and Mother Hips? Maybe.

And yes, Crumb's brother has a mag out with his art in it and it's called **CRUMB'S BROTHER'S MAGAZINE** and you can get that from Last Gasp for \$3.50 pp. You decide who is most demented, Crumb or his brother.

Volume 10 of **THE COMPLETE CRUMB**, one of the lifetime projects of Fantagraphics books, is introduced by Jesse, Crumb's son. Frosty the Snowman is on the cover and you get to look at this cover RC would have done for **ZAP #7** if it hadn't been Spain's turn at bat.

Steve Lafler gave me **BUZZARD 10** while I was strolling down the artists' alley at Wonder Con. He says he will soon return to solo books, one of which will feature his character, Bughouse.

The second edition of **CUSTOM CULTURE** has been printed and is in stock at Last Gasp. This book relates the history of hot rod culture in and around Los Angeles, featuring photos and cars

by folks like Von Dutch, Ed Roth, and Robert Williams. Some great art and writing in this one. \$35 pp from Last Gasp.

Clay Geerdes
Comix Wave

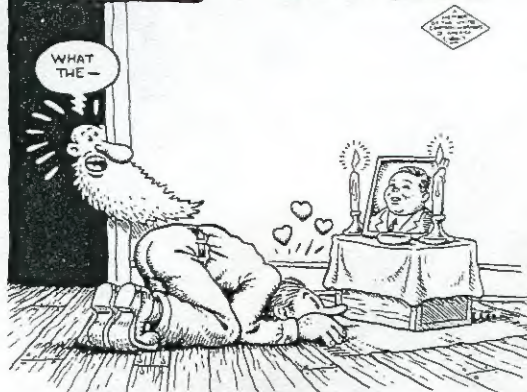


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STAR HEAD **DIE LAUGHING** 75¢ READERS MATURE



NO.7 **ZAP** 50¢ ADULTS ONLY comics



PACK YOUR FINE SELF INTO YOUR BLUE DRESS, SUGAR PIE!



Seen the new Overstreet Guide? The misguide to straight comic books? Looks like Overstreet and his clique just pump up the titles they collect and ignore all the new companies. Howard Chaykin's **AMERICAN FLAGG** is worth "cover or less?" Will Meugniot's **DNAgents** worth "cover or less?" The first few issues of **GHOST RIDER** [in Western drag] are inflated to \$300 apiece? Are we in the real world here?

From England, **FANNY 2** is devoted to how women view sex.

THE LESBIAN HAS TO DECIDE WHAT IS PERMISSIBLE WITH HER OWN SET OF RULES.



WELL I WANT THIS... AND MMM... THAT'S QUITE NICE. BUT THAT IS TOTALLY OUT OF THE QUESTION. I THINK...

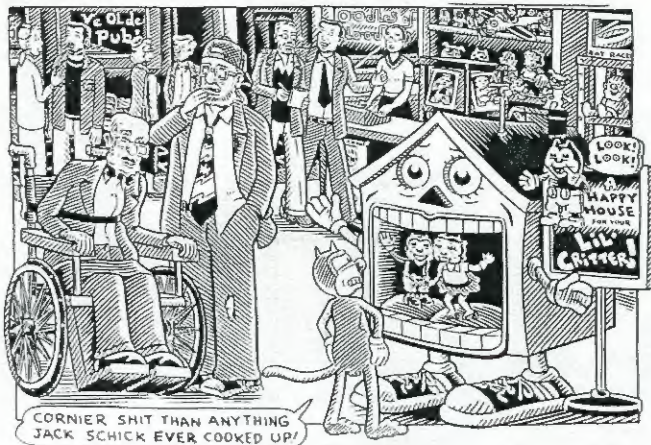
THE NEW MAN DOESN'T TREAT WOMEN AS SEX OBJECTS. INSTEAD HE SEDUCES THEM WITH HIS 'SENSITIVITY'



YES, I think all men should acknowledge the female in them...

GWAR "that weird rock and roll band that runs around on stage hacking at big rubber monsters with paper maché swords" has come out with a comic book done by the artists. **GWAR 1** was published this month by Last Gasp [POB 410067, San Francisco CA 94141-0067]. A few of the panels are scattered about this page. \$7 pp with an age statement. You always have to claim you're 21 to get underground comix through the mail!





More great stuff in **WALDO'S WORLD 2**. This is a fictionalized history of the animation business by Simon and Kim Deitch. Their father was Gene Deitch who worked for Paul Terry and UPA.

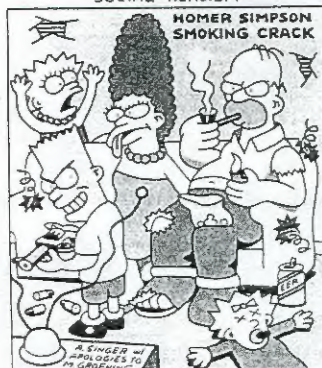
Lots of minicomic action around Wonder Con this year. A number of dealer's have the comlx displayed! A few years back, they wouldn't even look at them. There are even a couple of booths exclusively devoted to the DZs and minis.

Signs of the times. **VAMPIRELLA** revived. A model wearing the familiar red costume signing copies. And me wondering how Jim Valentino can wear that hot leather **SHADOWHAWK** jacket on such a warm day.

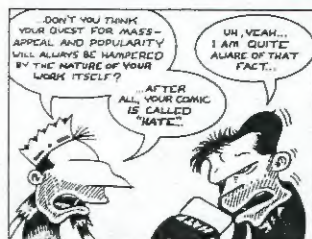
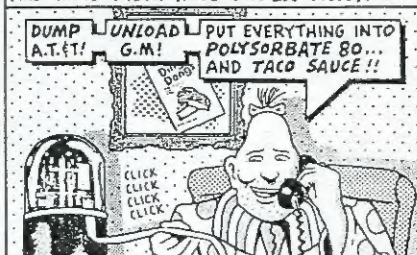
THE OLD PUNKS



NO EXIT © M Andy Singer
SOCIAL REALISM



THEN AGAIN, MAYBE IT'S ALL JUST BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING AS LAYPEOPLE...AND WE SHOULD SIMPLY TRUST THAT COMPETENT, HIGHLY-TRAINED FINANCIAL PROFESSIONALS HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL...



Tom Tomorrow swipes Zippy! Yep. Put him in **THIS MODERN WORLD**. I saw it in the San Francisco Bay Guardian for April 20, 1994. Hitler's birthday. Says along the side that Griffith gave him permission, but, Tom, you're not supposed to ask. What's cartoon swiping coming to?

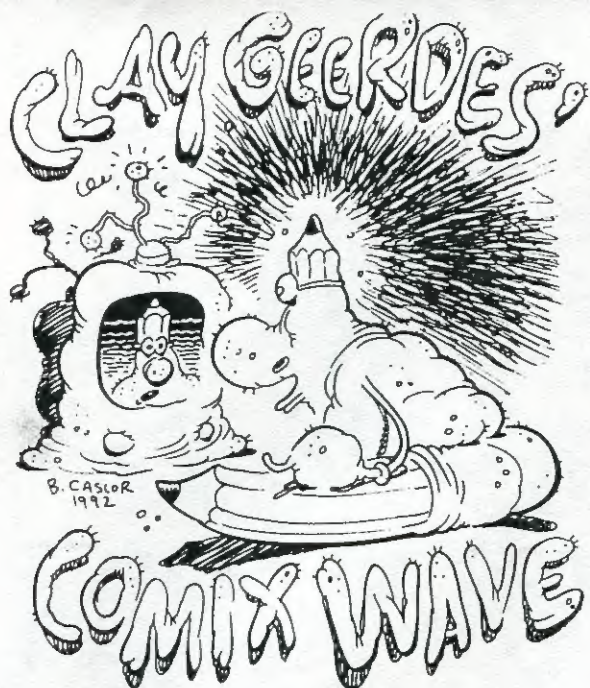
HATE 15 is just as hate-filled as **HATE 14**. Will this never end? Perhaps. Pete Bagge promises new things, But does a cartoonist control his character or is the character his jailer?

CUD 6 Was fun. I love that fat character and his weird shenanigans. Artist Terry Laban has even done a two-pager on Jackie O. Wasn't she the one who...yeah, that was her.

THE JAM continues through a seventh issue from Dark Horse.

CEREBUS is up to #181 and going strong.





WONDER CON '94

What did I notice at Wonder Con this year? Well, I saw a lot of Image comics selling at cut-rate prices. Ditto Valiants and Defiants and various other independents. What this means to me is that someone is glutting a saturated market. At a con, successful books are never on sale at less than cover price and it's more common to see them marked up. I'm skeptical about comic book inflation. I see most of it was manipulation. There is a lot of corruption in the latest Overstreet Guide and in the business in general, but in the main what I see is comic collecting shifting class-level. Many books are simply not going to be available to the lower echelon any more. Auctions at Southeby's in New York have drawn the attention of the wealthier people who collect and I suspect in the next few years all of the Golden and Silver age comics will vanish into the vaults.

I saw a lot of younger people sitting in front of fortunes in Golden Age books. Now these people never bought those comics at the drugstore and lovingly protected them from aging, read them over, showed them to friends, took pleasure in owning them; they inherited them and want to turn them into cash. Fine, a game of store, but it has nothing to do with the love of the medium many of us have. I used to visit with some of the guys who had those Golden Age books and I remember talking about the times and the characters with them. When I see a twenty-year-old guy sitting with all those books, I know I've lost a friend to death or the rest home, that's what it feels like from my end. I walked around Wonder Con hearing stories of sickness and death, remembering all the people I'll never see again, folks like Jack Kirby, Bob Clampett, Harvey Kurtzman, Wally Wood, cartoonists too numerous to list.

For all that, I'm not really down this year. Just introspective. I stopped to visit with Dan O'Neill for a minute and found out he was faxing his strip to the **Bay Guardian** each week. High tech funnies. Near him, Larry Welz had a model handing out Cherry trading cards. At the other end of the room was a model in a red Vampirella costume, posing and signing. A tough looking playmate of the month was signing something across the room. When I passed her, she looked like she had lost her way on the Sunset Strip and wandered too far north. There was free Fleer's bubble gum and Topps had a large display this year promoting trading cards. Image was giving out free postcards and posters. An entire section of the Dealer's room was devoted to video games [which I hate]. Corporate linkage at work. Marvel allied with Nintendo. Brain crunching. I bought a shirt Sergio Aragones drew for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. I heard announcements for panels I never attended. I'm not patient enough to sit and listen to hours of industry hype promoted as entertainment. I like to see the real people, but a glimpse of them walking around is enough. I'm not interested in how long it takes them to come up with an idea that is acceptable to the editorial board or how long it takes someone to ink a Spider Man swipe and I leave all those terminally long bullshit discussions about who is suing who for what to **THE COMICS JOURNAL**. One of the problems with having a Pro's-only conference prior to Wonder Con is that the people who have been on the scene talking business and power-lunching all week look tired out by the time Wonder Con opens. I saw Pros who were having a hard time keeping their eyes open. Not that I

Most of the people drawing comics are men. And men like to look at women. They like to draw them the way they imagine them. Fantasy women. Perfect bodies. One of the masters in the 1940s was a man named Matt Baker. He drew for Fiction House. Lots of jungle queens and rich heiresses-cum-heroines. AC has reprinted several collections of his work in the **SKY GAL** series. The idea in those days was to show a beautiful woman in all the possible poses and to justify this she had to be in action all the time. **SKY GAL** worked as a waitress in an airfield diner and in every story she managed to get into the kind of trouble that had her fighting the bad guys, often on the wings of planes. If you think this formula ended when Fiction House folded, think again. I've reprinted a page from Erik Larsen's **Savage Dragon** 9 [April, 1994] to show that comic fantasy doesn't change very much from decade to decade. This juxtaposition of then and now also suggests that the repressive branch of feminism has had little effect on the younger generation of comic artists. —Clay Geerdes, May, 1994.

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blame them. Why open your eyes only to see one more geeky kid shoving product in your face for the millionth autograph?

I walk and look at Japanese action figures and old plastic toys from the fifties and I learn what is valued and what is not. Action figures. There's a joke, huh? These plastic pieces of rot just cost money and lay around. No action to them at all. \$5 for a **Dick Tracy** video. Didn't anybody like Warren Beatty as Dick? Guess not. Saw comics advertised as half off Guide which means they were marked way up in the first place. Saw a **MAD** 1 for \$2,000. Probably cheap compared to next year's price. Saw **Comicbase**, a nice program on sale for about a hundred. I considered it, but I would have to put in all my underground and newwave comic and I'm not really interested in reading someone else's rap about Superman, Batman, et al on the little screen. There was another group selling computer information, mostly to dealers. We are all in so many databases these days. Electronic junk mail is the wave of the future. To find a little useful information on Internet, you have to wade through tons of useless rot. After all, any idiot can log on and run off at the key all night long, dumping copies in any open Mail box.

I did see a lot of alternative or newwave comic book action and I think that aspect of comics is live and well. People have learned that they can produce a few copies of anything via computer or xerox and spread these among their own circle of friends, having a good time in the process and ignoring the big business of comic books [superhero maintenance for the eternally pubescent]. It felt good to me to see these racks of minis and DZs. It is a fact that many of the bigger companies are going to come crashing down in the next few years. Bankruptcy on the way. Those who mistakenly think they can ignore the economic law of diminishing returns are in for enlightenment in the nineties. The tricks work for a little while, but they do not sustain a business over the long run. You can cheat the kids with double covers and double-numbering and mini-series and crossovers and Zero issues and carbon copy universes and multiverses but only for a little while. The kids get wise and when they dump all that shit back on the market and find there are no buyers, only sellers, I suspect a lot of comic book moguls will be back bagging groceries or working on data entry in one of those windowless fluorescent rooms.

Here's a tidbit. Half Price Books, a chain with two outlets here in Berkeley, has been selling back issue comic books for half-price. What is this going to do to a business based upon artificial inflation of back issues? What most of the regular comic book stores do is raise the price of an issue each time a new one comes out. If I can go over to Half-Price and buy the Image and Valiant comics for half, why would I go and pay double somewhere else?

Re Image and other independent companies, Overstreet is totally wrong on the back issue prices of these books. No dealer I know is selling any **SPAWNS** or **SHADOWHAWKS** or **SHADOWMANS** for the low figures listed in Overstreet, so the current generation can no longer use Overstreet as a valid guide when collecting comics. There are actually several different Guides around now and one young dealer looked at me cynically and said, "Fuck Overstreet. Why the hell should I let this guy tell me what to charge for my books? Who is he anyway? Just some

guy who tried to run the whole scene back in the seventies. He's not happening now."

What has been happening for several years now is that the majors, Marvel and DC, have been challenged successfully by several companies and instead of *setting* the trends, they have begun to *follow* them. I see Marvel and DC characters these days which are imitations of the style used by Mike Lee and Rob Liefeld and Todd McFarland. It's not that the old-line superheroes are not holding their own; after all, they have megabucks promoting them with TV and product-tie-ins and it would be nearly impossible to grow up not knowing who Superman and Spider Man are, but more and more young kids have a heightened awareness of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the Mighty Morphen Power Rangers. The establishment superheroes mean little to the kids and to deal with this many companies shifted toward a more adult audience, particularly after the underground and alternative breakthrough of the early seventies. The Superman of today is designed to appeal to adults more than little kids. I was reading Superman when I was five or six in a time when no adult would touch a comic book. Today's adult looks with disdain on the Turtles and Power Rangers the little kids love. The humor and ideas in the **LOIS AND CLARK** series is adult.

Overstreet demonstrates this generation gap better than anyone. He lists the first edition of **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES** for \$250 mint. Good luck. I don't know anyone that would sell one for that. **TMNT 1** is the **ACTION 1** of its generation. In a few years people will be paying thousands of dollars for those early black and white turtles. The mass produced Images, etc., on the other hand will be in the quarter bins, with a handful of exceptions. There were only about 3,000 of those early turtles. That's a rare comic book.

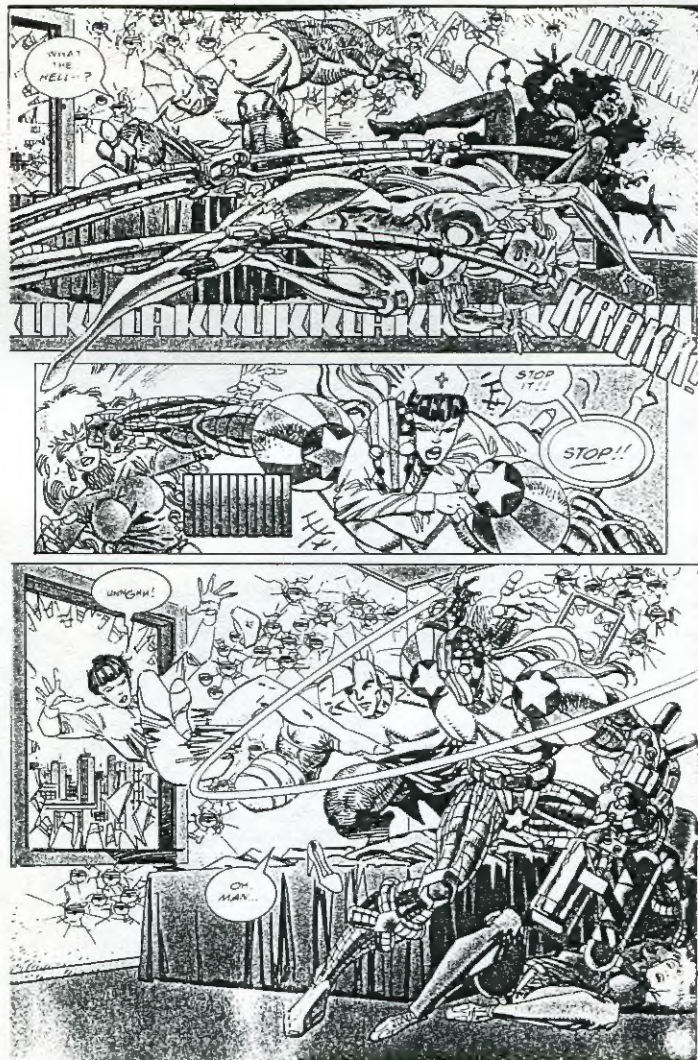
A trend I see in pressure from the major distributors to put small retail stores out of business in favor of larger chains. You can read about this in detail in **TCJ**, but ask any dealer. To survive as a comic book store today, you have to carry the latest titles and to get those that sell well you have to order a lot that don't. You also have to pay the bills whether the books sell or not. Most small stores do not have warehouse space to store thousands of unsold books. I predict specialty stores, antique comic stores, and chain outlets in the malls which will carry only the majors and ignore all the small companies. The dealer may make a killing on a big hype like the Death of Superman, but it costs him in the long run. I saw dozens of those Superman titles at the Con for as low as a quarter apiece! And is the Overstreet Guide in phase? Hell, no. **SHAZAM** was a huge disaster back in the early seventies and you couldn't give those comic books again. There's a book truly worth "cover or less," yet it's listed at \$4. Ha!

Not much Underground action at Wonder Con. Only Last Gasp was present and even last Gasp has not come out with a major underground in the past few months. There has been no new **ZAP** or **HUP**. I saw Denis Kitchen on the floor, but his company has not focused on underground comix for quite awhile. He did publish a 25th anniversary edition of **PEOPLE'S COMICS** [a book Crumb did for his friend Terry Zweigoff back in 1972], but the cover of Kitchen's latest catalog features Li'l Abner, a character who peaked in the forties, and most of his merchandise is nostalgia, not underground. I didn't see the Todds, so assume Rip Off Press skipped Wonder Con. A couple of dealers brought a box or two of old undergrounds, but most did not. Comic Relief had a Plymell **ZAP** listed for \$800. I don't know whether it sold or not. Be interesting to see someone come to a con and display an underground collection. One would see an almost infinite variety of styles and subjects. What strikes me when I stand back and look at the Image display is how similar all the books look. Each character looks like a tracing of the other.

I didn't take my camera at all this year. In the past, I routinely took pictures of everyone. The result is I have a photo album that might be called the Underground Book of the Dead. I decided I didn't need any more pictures. Most of the folks I know are getting bigger and bigger and looking gray and craggy. Not the healthiest business working with comics. Artists tend to sit and draw for hours and hours and unless they have exercycles or force themselves to swim or jog they tend to develop all kinds of physical problems as they age. Some exacerbate these with nicotine and alcohol and caffeine and sugar. I would have taken a shot of Vampirella for you though, but I figure you've seen her before and if you ever go to a Con anywhere you're more than likely to see her again. The creator of Vampi wasn't even mentioned. Who he? Forrest Ackerman. There are those of us who remember the days of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** and the Warren post-EC horror books.

That's it. Thanks to Bryan Uhlenbrock and his staff for doing all the hard work, unsung heroes all.

--Clay Geerdes, April 26, 1994.



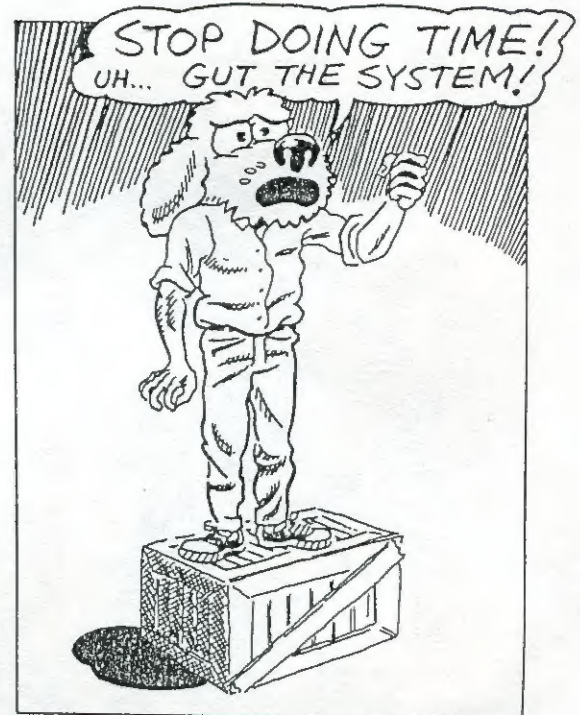


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BUGHOUSE 1 is the latest from Steve Lafler. Some of the original art for this book is available. If you are interested, send an SASE to Steve at 495 Elwood Ave., #5, Oakland, CA 94610. The comic was inspired by Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman.

Doug Allen did the cover for BUZZARD 11. \$3.75 from Cat-Head Comics, POB 576, Hudson, MA 01749. There's a new Dogboy story in this one and Bob Crabb enlightens everyone on "The Dan O'Neill Method" of cartooning.



Yeah we Like clay Geerdes COMIX WAVE...so wot?



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Gary Fields is inking **ROCCO'S MODERN LIFE** for Marvel. You've seen some of Gary's logos on CW. He did a minicomic called **DOG COMICS**.

Inspired by some of the pulp magazines of the late thirties and early forties, **STRANGE ATTRACTIONS** is worth your attention. The story is by Mark Sherman, the art by Michael Cohen. I like these parody covers. Spicy was synonymous with sexy in that period. Some of the underground artists of the sixties were planning **SPICY SLIME ADVENTURE TALES**, but the book was never published. Actually, spicy came from the old nursery rhyme that proclaimed that little girls were made of "sugar and spice and everything nice." If you can't find this book in your local store, try writing to RetroGrafix, 2130 Williams, #3, Bellingham, WA 98225. \$3.25 should get you an issue. There are three so far that I know of.

Small press used to be relegated to a table here and there at the larger cons, but the movement is growing. **Alternative Press Expo 1994** was held in San Jose, June 4, at the Parkside Hall. Sponsored by Slave Labor Graphics, the guests included Dave Sim, Jeff "Bone" Smith, Lloyd Dangle, Steve Lafler, Ed Brubaker, and an impressive roster of other Small Press publishers and creators.

Batton Lash's **WOLFF & BYRD: COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE** is out in a solo title from Exhibit A Press, 4657 El Cajon Way, San Diego, CA 92115. A book about two lawyers who defend swamp creatures, werewolves, and others from the realm of horror. Well drawn. \$3.25 pp.

Cheesecake lives in **THE OUTER SPACE BABES**, a creation of C. J. Henderson. \$3.73 pp from Silhouette Studios, 228 W. 23rd St., New York, NY, 10011.

Christopher Bors' One Man Studio has moved to 79 Yaun Avenue, Apt. 19, Liberty, New York 12754. Chris is teaching art at Liberty High School this year.





Heard about McTits? This is a take-out food spot in Melbourne, Australia. Topless waitresses in see-through aprons. McDonald's has send McTits a threatening letter. They do that to anyone using Mc in their logo. Beats me how they get away with that crap. If my name was McDonald and I wanted to call my café McDonalds, who are they to tell me no. How can you own a name that is common to thousands?

San Jose Comic book and record dealer Bob Sidebottom died of a heart attack this past February. Bob drank a wee bit more than he should have and paid the piper. I knew him and his wife, Miz Liz, in the early seventies when I was doing conventions. Always liked Bob. His California license plate was COMICS. If you were a reader of the old Comic Buyer's Guide, you saw the ad Crumb did for Sidebottom, that little guy saying "We got Comics." Bob wanted to be a comic book publisher and was influenced by the success of underground comix in the cities. He published Ed Watson's work in CALIFORNIA COMICS, did some issues of BARBARIAN, BARBARIAN WOMEN, and a single issue of SUPERBITCH. There was more than a little male backlash against the feminist funnies in those books. The Barbarian stuff was stimulated by Marvel's CONAN series. Underground artists like Spain were upset with that book. Spain did his version on a poster, a character nothing like the clean-shaven Conan drawn by Barry Smith. Jaxon painted a few Conans which were rejected by Marvel. Howard's Conan was probably more beast than human and the underground concept was a lot closer than the romanticized version of Marvel, which is being reprinted at this writing [5/94].

I saw Bob and his wife for the last time at a San Diego Comic Convention in the eighties. Bob was in his late forties. I don't have his dates.

The Dallas Fantasy Fair is July 29-31 this year. Info from Bulldog, POB 820488, Dallas, TX 75382.

POOPSHEET is \$1 pp from Rick Bradford, Yowza! Comix, POB 161095, Ft. Worth, TX 76161-1095. 16 page plugzine. Small Press oriented.

The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary coming out this fall will be short a lot of terms now considered politically incorrect. Revisionism marches on. You can no longer use KIKE, DARKIE, SPIC, LEZZIE, NIGGER, etc. Those doing the dictionary caved into pressure from the Christian right and the Anti-Defamation league, pleading that the words appearing in the Dictionary influenced young players. Oh, horseshit! I heard those words on the street and playground before I could read. Does this mean they will vanish from the various collections of American slang? I disagree that listing popular jargon encourages usage. I disagree with repression in general and feel it is a lot healthier to have these words defined and placed in historical context than swept under the rug. Removing fascism or totalitarianism from dictionaries isn't likely to change the evolution of government and those people who think Spic and Nigger are unlikely to see or understand the lifestyles of other ethnic groups.

A color page by Bill Griffith appeared in the Sunday, May, 1, 1994, in the San Francisco EXAMINER Magazine. Features Bill at a New York party, bored with the celebrities. Zippy appears in the last panel. Bill had a two-page color spread in the mag for April 24, 1994. Collectors may write to the EXAMINER, Box 7260, San Francisco, CA 94120. The mag is part of the Sunday edition and incorporates the older Image Magazine.

The San Diego Con will be August 4-7. Information: POB 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-9458. [619]544-9555.



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE



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Plus ça change: plus c'est la même chose.

It may not have been the fault of the Los Angeles Police Department—the cops arrived late—but this was a mismanaged investigation.

—Mack Sennett alluding to the investigation into the murder of director William Desmond Taylor on February 1, 1922. See *KING OF COMEDY*. New York: Doubleday, 1954, p. 242.

In the novels of the 90s, character became an extension of technology. We got long descriptions of Ethernet, paeans to electronics and short descriptions of those who served the machines. Technodependency. Man as special effect. The computer was the new metaphor. One needed to *upgrade* one's thinking. It would be nice to *access* her secret file. Plug and play, baby! A Jack of all trades became a multitasker on line. Entertainment was all. The news was entertainment. When O. J. Simpson was accused of murdering his wife and her friend in June of 1994, major Networks interrupted all their regular programming to follow the police as they chased him around the freeway system in Los Angeles for nearly two hours. His Preliminary Hearing was carried live and discussed on every news and talk show. People were upset when they learned that they would not be broadcast. It was like seeing a movie and being denied the climactic scenes. Simpson was the new cover boy. He was on TV GUIDE, TIME, NEWSWEEK. The NATIONAL ENQUIRER came out with the story of his last film FROGMAN for which O. J. learned how to kill with a knife from a Navy SEAL. Everyone who had ever passed him on the street was selling a story about Simpson. Anyone who had even the remotest contact with him was followed by paparazzi day and night.

R. Crumb's graphic version of Franz Kafka's METAMORPHOSIS appears in the July issue of ESQUIRE, pp. 90-97. It will be part of INTRODUCING KAFKA from Totem Books. Call your bookie.

DON THOMPSON [1935-1994]

Don Thompson, certainly one of the fathers of comic fandom as we know it today, passed away on May 23, 1994, at his home in Iola, Wisconsin. He was 58. Most of you remember Don and Maggie from their "Beautiful Balloons" days with Alan Light's BUYER'S GUIDE. Don continued to edit CBG when Krause bought it and he died in the saddle, having his last editorial published posthumously. So long, friend. I'll be along one of these days and we'll trade zines again.

WHICH KING IS THE REAL KING?

I can't believe these people. Part of me thinks this is one of those controversies invented in the Press Relations office to promote Disney's LION KING, kind of like that story planted in the NATIONAL INQUIRER about Michael Jackson buying the corpse of the Elephant Man. The other part of me wonders about the new generation of writers and animators working for Disney. If they didn't know about Osamu Tezuka's KIMBA, THE WHITE LION, a 1965-66 tv series in the US, why didn't they? I know a few American animators and I would argue that they know the history of their medium and have reference books to look up what they may not have in immediate memory. So I am skeptical as hell about Howard Green's comment to the press that "none of the principals involved in creating THE LION KING were aware of Kimba or Tezuka [S. F. CHRONICLE, July 14, 1994, p. D-1]." What are they doing in the business if they are unaware of the work of someone with Tezuka's stature and why are they so casual about insulting this man in such a manner? I think the Japanese who are upset have a good case. In both stories, an African lion king is killed, leaving a young cub. In both the cub returns after a period of exile, overthrows the evil lion who has usurped his father's throne, and restores goodness to the kingdom. In both, the good lions are aided by a wise old baboon and a talkative bird, while the evil lions are aided by henchmen hyenas. The evil Japanese lion has one eye and is called Claw, while Disney's villain has a scar over one eye and is called Scar. The Disney promo department even swiped the image of the little lion cub looking up to see the ghost of his father in the clouds!

During his lifetime, Walt Disney was noted for putting his name above the title and leaving the name of his source for later on in the credits, but he did credit his sources. Felix Salten's name is on BAMBI. It would have been the decent and gracious thing for Disney's current people to give Tezuka credit. The story is a fairy tale standard with a lot of precedents in folklore, but a swiped layout is no coincidence.

TOASTER WARS

More legal theater of the absurd. Someone from the Jefferson Starship company has filed suit against Berkeley Systems over the image of a flying toaster used in a screen saver. Jefferson Airplane put out an album back in 1973 which featured a group of toasters flying through the clouds. This LP was called *Thirty Seconds over Winterland*. The suit alleges that the images in Berkeley Systems' After Dark screen saver are similar to those on the Airplane album therefore Berkeley Systems should pony up a royalty or be guilty of copyright infringement.

What a steaming pile of—er; what lawyer dreamed up this money-making scam? Who is likely to mistake a record album made in 1973 with a screen saver sold in the 1990s. I certainly know the difference. To my knowledge, Jefferson Starship is not marketing a continuing character in the form of a little flying toaster so there is no trademark infringement. Are they saying a cartoonist can't sit down and draw a flying toaster if he wants to? Bullshit, guys. I hope you eat that lawsuit and your lawyer bills you double for every phone call. The only similarity in this case is that both the screen saver and the album cover feature flying toasters and you can't copyright the idea of a flying toaster. I'm surprised the guy who did THE BRAVE LITTLE TOASTER hasn't gotten in on this. And wasn't there a flying toaster in that little underground video parody of STAR WARS, HARDWARE WARS?

Did you know that when you microwave food, it becomes something the body no longer recognizes as food and cannot assimilate?

In fact, when anyone microwaves food, the oven exerts a power input of about 1,000 watts or more. This radiation results in destruction and deformation of molecules of food and results in the formation of new compounds (called radiolytic compounds) unknown to man and nature.

PPNF Nutrition Journal V. 18, p. 3.

Just when you think you've seen the last PROFAGANDA WAR, another one of the little buggers shows up in the mail. Well, Clark Dissmeyer promises #13 will be the final issue, but, hey, we know Clark, huh? He'll have to say something about World War III and other future catastrophes. 50¢ and a stamp from the man at 2313 Central, #7, Kearney, NE 68847. Add a buck and get Clark's PLANET DER ZUFRIEDENHEIT and TWO ENIGMATIC TALES

A happy childhood is the best deterrent to art. Well-adjusted parents will do the trick. How many novels does it take to exorcise the abusive or insensitive distant parent? Does anyone doubt that Jackson Pollock enjoying smearing his shit on the wall when he was a baby?

R. C. HARVEY PUBLISHES HISTORY OF COMIC STRIP

If you really enjoy the old Comic strips, you'll be pleased with **THE ART OF THE FUNNIES: An Aesthetic History**, a well-researched history of the medium by Illinois cartoonist and historian Robert C. Harvey. While Harvey is technical in his descriptions of the art of masters like Winsor McCay, George McManus, and Milton Caniff, he is witty and down to earth when he tells the life stories of the people who created and made the daily and Sunday comic strips an integral part of our lives. This book is short enough to be read in a few hours, but there is enough detail to show that the author has assimilated the previous attempts at comic art history by Becker, Sheridan, Waugh, and is unafraid to advance his own theories and opinions about why the form evolved and survived as it did. Harvey is a careful writer. He does his homework and does not write about comic strips off the top of his head as certain quasi-scholars I might name. This does not mean that Harvey will not get an argument about some of his information. He gives Winsor McCay credit for all of the animation in **GERTIE THE DINOSAUR**, for example, and this is debatable. Donald Crafton suggests that the style of the drawings in that pioneer animated cartoon indicate it was probably done by the Bray Studio [BEFORE MICKEY: The Animated Film 1898-1928. Boston: MIT Press, 1982, p. 260.] It is possible, I suppose, that a busy man like McCay did all 4,000 of those drawings himself, but I've always found that highly unlikely.

Harvey concentrated on newspaper comic strips presenting a detailed history of the better known characters like Little Orphan Annie, Popeye and Terry and the Pirates and while this may seem a simple task to many, it is actually quite complex because it requires the author to have in-depth knowledge of the history of the times in which those comic strips were printed. The dailies are a mirror of the lives of those who read them and it takes someone who understands the social and psychological meaning of the times to explain them effectively. Harvey does this quite well, including important background people like Captain Russell Patterson without whom we would never have seen strips like **THE GUMPS**, **LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE**, or **MOON MULLINS**.

Harvey says Bud Fisher's Mutt was short for Muttonhead and perhaps that is true, but I suggest an alternative. Fisher and his peers had to take Latin to graduate from High School and I suspect he recalled a bit of Latin when he named his character. Mutt comes from the Latin *Mutis*, which means dumb, but it could also come from *Mutonis*, the word for penis, hence Mutt is a dumb dick! Turn Mutt's head upside down and his nose becomes an erect penis, his moustache pubic hair. Sidney Smith picked this up for the chinless Gump and it was later copied by Jay Lynch for his character, Nard. This shift from bulb-nosed characters to phallic noses was not accidental.

Augustus Mutt has an elevated classical name, yet he is a lowlife character whose entire life is dedicated to playing the horses. Augustus was Caesar's title and meant consecrated, sacred, or Majestic. To pin this on Mutt was an in-joke. A man like Fisher with aspirations to higher education—He started college—would have enjoyed juxtaposing the highest and the lowest, knowing that his readers would get the joke unconsciously whether they could understand it intellectually or not. One of the reasons Robert Crumb's art made people laugh so hysterically in the late sixties was his technique of making overt what had always been covert in comic strips. Mutt and Gump and, yes, even Popeye, were all dicknoses, but Crumb drew a strip about a character who had a real dick for a nose. Such flagrant phallicism was an outrage to repressed or "normal" people, hence very popular with a younger generation in rebellion against parental values.

In **THE ART OF THE FUNNIES**, Harvey includes a chapter on Milton Caniff's **TERRY AND THE PIRATES**, a strip which I followed all during my childhood in the 1940s. I am sure this will be treated in a great more detail when his two volume biography of Caniff finds a publisher.

I recommend the Harvey history without reservations. If you do not find it locally, you can call the publisher, University of Mississippi Press, at 1-800-737-7788.

On June 30, 1994, the California State Supreme Court said R. J. Reynolds will go on trial in California for seducing underage people into nicotine addiction with those phallic Joe Camel ads. San Francisco attorney Janet Mangini filed suit against RJR in 1992. It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy or smoke cigarettes in California and she charged RJR with enticing minors to smoke via Joe Camel ads and giveaways. Sales to children went from 6 to 476 million between 1988-92. Lots of money in the drug business.

On July 3, 1971, Jim Morrison overdosed on heroin in a bathtub in Paris.



The Performance Art duel between Bob Cudd and Ursula Clamm in **CUD 7** shows Terry Laban to be a master of parody. Don't miss this one.

Pat Moriarity gets a tooth pulled in **BIG MOUTH 4**. Lots of whimsical stuff in this one.

You can get Steve Willis's **CATALOG OF OBSCURO COMIX AND OTHER STUFF** for 52¢ in stamps. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

Mike Stengl continues to publish poetry. His latest book is **HANGING WITH THE TOOTHAIRY AND OTHER TALES OF LESSER BRAVADO**. \$2 from him at POB 568, Trinidad, CA 95570.





MEGACARTOONS FOR THE MASSES

Cartoons used to parody the absurdities and excesses of everyday socio-political life, but with the advent of the mega-cartoons of the eighties we have seen a reversal. Real life now parodies the cartoon world. Who wants to hear about reality? Homelessness, AIDS, drug addiction, suicide, incest, child-molesting priests, lawsuits over remembered incest, plane crashes, earthquakes, tornados, blizzards, oil spills, toxic waste pollution, mass murder—oy, the talk shows drain the populace daily with endless discussions of subjects once considered private. Today's tragedy is tomorrow's tv movie. How to write a great novel about character when modern telemarketing techniques have changed character into consumer? The choices of the average person are meaningless. If you sit at a terminal, what difference does it make whether you sit in the Metropolitan Life Building or in the Transamerica pyramid? Super movies about superheroes like Superman and Batman proved popular in the eighties because the average person lives in fear and needs the fantasy of someone invulnerable and incorruptible to sustain everyday life. Not a day goes by that we don't read about a drive-by shooting or a hold-up or a mass murder or a gang assault. Don't worry. The megamarketeers will send **THE SHADOW** to protect you. **THE FLINTSTONES** will make you laugh. **THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES** will teach your kids how to speak intelligently about pizza and the **MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS** will protect them from muggers and kidnappers and child pornographers. Territorial wars are television shows that spare you the details like bodybags and burning villages that made the War in Viet Nam unpopular in the 1960s. People are being murdered every day in Central America and Iraq, but tv won't trouble you with that news. Big Brother [Time-Warner/Disney] will take care of you. **SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS** will be out on video October 28th in time for your Christmas shopping. Robin will join Batman in the next megacartoon. Arnold Schwarzenegger will get pregnant in **JUNIOR**.

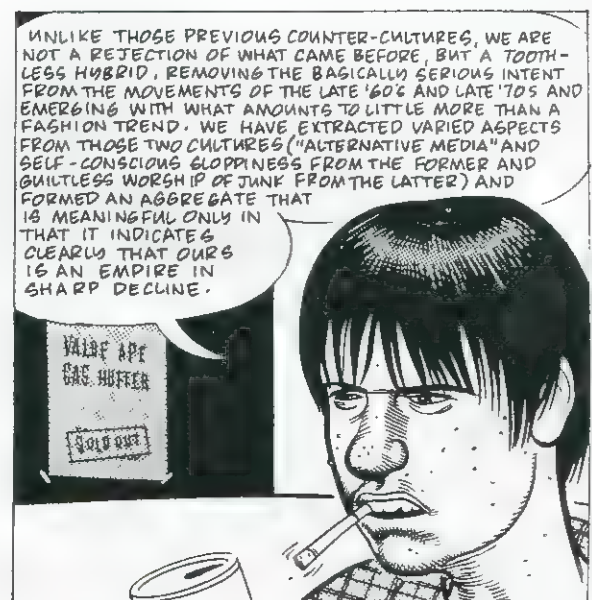
Clay Geerdes' COMIX WAVE 154. © 1994. All Rights Reserved. Artwork herein is © the artists concerned and used for promotional purposes only. \$12 for my next dozen issues. POB 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. Make checks or MOs to Clay Geerdes.

DENNIS THE MENACE: ADULTS ONLY

It seems to be in to trash adults, particularly parents, and the movies that continue to wallow in this unhealthy trend are often made by adult parents. Call it the Home Alone Syndrome. A smartass kid who ought to be tied to a chair and fed a straight diet of tofu and garbanzo beans is left alone in the family home. In a short period of time he manages to destroy nearly everything, particularly any hapless adults who wander near him. Take John Hughes version of **DENNIS THE MENACE**; we're in major adult-trash mode here, dudes. As Mr. Wilson, Walter Mathau is routinely tortured for over an hour and a half. This movie is about as funny as **THE EXORCIST** and gives none of the satisfaction. It's filmed like a horror film. The demonic kid who knows everything and is only interested in destruction, the more violent and bloody the better, skips happily from adult victim to adult victim with an ax or a butcher knife in his hand until he is violently eviscerated in the last minute or two of the film. Only this is suburban sitcom, not teen horror, and cute little Dennis is not punished by being sent back to hell where he belongs; after ruining Mr. Wilson's garden party and nearly crippling the man in one cruel incident after another, he is allowed to return to his nerdy parents to await the sequel. And you know any movie this rotten will be remade. Why did I hate this movie? Why didn't I think it was funny when Dennis ruined all the food for the party and sat their grinning? Why didn't I laugh at the final image, a burning marshmallow stuck in the center of Mr. Wilson's forehead? Why did I see the poor man moaning in pain in intensive care, his hair and eyebrows and lashes burned off, His wife wondering how she will manage their big house all by herself? Why didn't I crack up with laughter earlier when Dennis spilled mothballs all over the attic floor and Mr. Wilson slipped on them and fell to break his back and rupture his spinal cord? That's really funny stuff, Hughes. I'm sure the parents who got this movie to show their kids died laughing.

I still like Hank Ketcham's little panel, but I suspect he hated this film as much as I did. I wish I could think of something good to say about it, but this is a cruel, mean-spirited, violent film, and anyone who shows it to a child needs counseling. A pratfall can be funny. Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton did them well in their early movies, but they always got up afterwards. When a man Walter Mathau's age slips and falls, he does not get up and smile and walk away, nor is he seen to do so in **DENNIS THE MENACE**. He would be seriously hurt. That's the difference, Hughes. After a few minutes, I began to see Dennis as a serious threat to Mr. Wilson's life, not as a mischievous little boy having some fun at the expense of an adult. Watching him pouring cleaning fluid in a bottle of nose drops, I felt like I was watching **CHILD'S PLAY 2**, not a comedy. If this film isn't rated R, one can only wonder about the constituency of the Board.

The University of Mississippi Press has republished Arthur Asa Berger's 1969 dissertation. **L'I' ABNER: A STUDY IN AMERICAN SATIRE** The book sells for \$14.95 Info 1-800-737-7788.



One panel reason why I enjoyed **EIGHTBALL 13**. Buy a copy! C.G.

Lately, there has been a debate over whether or not to let Reality World open Q-ZAR in our town. On one side are those people who think controlled games of laser tag are like boot camp for serial killers. On the other are those who say this is just a game like any other, so why shouldn't it be allowed?

When I was a kid, we wore guns on our hips and went around shooting each other every afternoon after school. The guns were toys and they were normally empty unless we had some caps left over from the 4th of July. The fantasies came to us from Western and gangster movies our Dads took us to on Friday nights. My fantasy self was usually Tim Holt or Billy the Kid or The Lone Ranger. I was always the good guy because I was the oldest and controlled the game. The younger kids were the bad guys and I relished shooting them over and over again. My Dad had several real guns around the house. He had a nice police .38 revolver with a silver handle that I often got out and played with when he wasn't around. It was never loaded or there would have been a few neighborhood kids missing from the local phone book. I'd spin the barrel and click the chamber. I liked the pistol, but I didn't care anything about the 30.06 rifle or the .12 gauge shotgun. My Dad was the mighty hunter. Him and my Uncle Jack. I hated hunting and never went when I could get out of it. One day the guns were gone. I don't know where they went, probably sold to a pawn shop in one of our moments of need, but I never saw them again. And I didn't really care or give it much thought. If toy guns came along at Christmastime, I'd play with them until they were broken or some more interesting game came along. I never bought a gun myself and have had no interest in them since childhood.

So I would be one of those people suggesting that laser tag is just a game kids play, a symbolic way of getting revenge on parents and other people who get in the way of the developing ego, not something to be too concerned about. If a kid is playing Q-ZAR in downtown Berkeley, he is not out holding up a 7-11 or driving around taking pot shots at homeless people. It's not that I like to see kids playing violent video games or virtual reality simulations—I don't—but I'm not too concerned that they do either.

Violence, the real violence, to me, is when someone is deprived of the chance at meaningful work then blamed for not doing it. And I don't mean the chance to sell junk food for four hours for less money than a businessman spends on a single taxi fare. To deal with violence, we have to deal with the frustration that causes it, not worry about the video or virtual reality games that arise as safety valves.

Doesn't an artificial image depend upon an actual image and isn't it a function of art to parody precursors?

—Egon Schiele, 1912.

Dear Clay,

I'd never heard of McTits, but when I visited Melbourne a few years back I saw several streets and stores named after Batman—John Batman [an Australian friend living in Anchorage tells me John Batman established Melbourne after sailing up the Yarra River to the city's present site; wonder why the city isn't called Batman, but I think founders were more modest in those days, naming places after the queen's officials].

—Jerry Riddle
Anchorage, Alaska

Ever wonder what your kids might look like if you had decided to have some? Well, **BABYMAKER** shows you a preview. The program, designed by Greg Deocampo, made the rounds in the Bay Area recently, a travelling multimedia Electric Carnival. To check out your future offspring, you get your face and your mate's scanned into an image file. The faces are merged or blended and the result is pasted onto Baby. Voila! Doesn't work that way in unvirtual reality, where a dominant gene from the deep past might show up making your baby look more like a distant ancestor than either parent, but...I like **FRANKENFACE**. In this one, concert-goers can merge parts of their own face with grotesque face parts from a computer database. You can be anybody or anything you want in cyberspace—symbolically, anyway.

Wes Wilson in **BILL GRAHAM PRESENTS**: "With printing and everything, I got somewhere around *seventy-five bucks for a poster*. There were probably five hundred printed on fourteen by twenty paper, pretty much some kind of vellum-y stock that was cheap. The main thing was money because you couldn't really afford to do anything fancy. The inking was black and white or a single color. Of course, the washup took time and that was an additional factor. From the seventy-five, I would make about forty-five bucks. So about probably eight hours of work. . . He thought it was so great. He was really impressed. Here he had shelled out, I think it was like fifty or sixty bucks, and he got all these posters and it was just a real knockout Everybody loved it. He got excited because it just really got his thing happening and I could tell he was going to call me for everything he needed after that. And I was happy about that. I only needed to do two a week to cover my expenses. Eighty-five to a hundred dollars a week [162]." And Bill Graham: "I used him on the early posters and he would get a hundred and fifty or two hundred of two hundred and fifty for each one [162]."

Watch for Howard Cruse's **STUCK RUBBER BABY**, a 224 page graphic autobiographical novel.

Marvel's Force Works 1 features the first pop-up comic book cover I have seen, which is about the only reason I can think of for collecting this imitative book.

BABY SUE marches on, now in magazine format. V. 4, No. 3, is \$3.73 from POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111.

Tired of looking at the desktop? Rather watched chickens throwing eggs? Delrina Corporation has created a Screen Saver based on one of Gary Larsen's **FAR SIDE** panels. \$25. Check your computer outlet.

S. Clay Wilson did the cover for Jon A. Jackson's **BLIND PIG**. Don't recall if I mentioned that to you before. The book came out in 1988 and has been remaindered locally. During Prohibition [1920-33], A Blind Pig was a speakeasy or small unmarked bar where people went to drink cocktails. And cocktails, incidentally, have no relation to cocks [roosters]. The term originated on the show horse circuit and referred to the cocked tails of the horses. The term became popular in novels in the mid-twenties and in magazines like **SMART SET**.

CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 155

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Theory is that Herbie Popnecker was based on Lou Costello. In **BUCK PRIVATES**, Lou plays a little guy named Herbie who gets a lollipop from a girl named Judy. And in case you thought rap was new, Lou does a rap in this movie from 1941.

ECO-THRILLER

I really enjoyed the lecture on the end of the environment tacked on after the climax of Steven Segall's **ON DEADLY GROUND**. Segall is more interesting than the character he plays in those escapist fantasies for the unemployed disenfranchised quasi-literate proletariat. Where Arnie Schwarzenegger routinely throws people this way and that when he isn't mowing down crowds of bad guy extras with a plastic Uzi, Segall's standard scene is right out of an old Tim McCoy depression Western. McCoy would stroll through the batwing doors of a saloon, saunter up to the bar, order a glass of milk, and wait for the extras in the black hats to giggle, chuckle, and challenge him, then he would beat up half a dozen of them without losing his black hat or getting his trademark black frock coat dusty. Segall strolls into a bar in Alaska, watches a poor Eskimo drunk get kicked around by a guy three times his size, then, after hesitating just long enough to let the adrenaline flow through audience, Segall beats, kicks, and karate chops half a dozen guys into unconsciousness. Like McCoy, Segall always turns out to be a Federal undercover agent on assignment. I enjoyed Michael Caine's portrayal of a cold-blooded capitalist oil dealer. I always thought Caine would have made a good James Bond, but what do I know?

Whatever happens in the electronic age, we're doomed to live it over and over via TV. Guilty or not, O. J. Simpson's hell is to watch his own deterioration take place in the tabloids and on the talk shows. Each time he is shown in close-up, he looks older, more tired, burned out. The jackals are waiting. What fate awaits the visible man?

CON GAMES

Here is how Jim Thompson described the role of a news butcher in **HEED THE THUNDER** [1946]: "The news butcher ... was so much batten for the corporation that employed him. Rather than depend upon a percentage of his sales, they absorbed his cash bond by means of 'loading' him with near-spoiled fruit, perishable sandwiches, and unsalable knick-knacks. Then, when he could not or would not supply more bond, they wrote him off and employed another agent. The individual...could not get his desserts in a contest with a corporation; and so the news agent who hoped to survive did so at the traveling public's expense and by the predication of his own morals. He who has wondered at the quick spreading of a filthy joke has never seen the news butch's line of pornographic booklets. The news butch was in on the green-goods racket. He was a peddler of brass watches and glass diamonds. He sold marked cards and crooked dice. And almost always he sold whisky [145]." In other words, a lot of people got their **TIAJUANA BIBLES** from news butchers. These hustlers would sell jewelry they claimed was gold and people only learned it was false when a finger or an arm turned green from contact with it, hence the *green goods racket*. Marked playing cards are often off-sized with the aces and royal cards slightly smaller or larger than the other cards. The variation is minimal and it takes a sharp observer to tell the difference. Since it is possible to buy these cards, pros could pull out a brand new deck in a small town game and win a reasonable amount of money before losing a few small pots and taking off. Crooked or loaded dices are weighted so that the player always throws a seven. The con man who used a crooked pair of dice could win in the short run, mainly with country rubes, but he was in danger if he stuck around too long. The con would enter a local game, bet low, pull a switch when the dice passed to him, win for awhile, then switch back and loss a few low bets before easing away from the game. It is as easy to palm a pair of dice as it is to palm a coin and with practice a good con can pull the switch easily as he shakes the dice before his roll. He shakes the straight dice, but releases the palmed loaded pair. Since the shooter or roller or player picks up the dice after a win and only passes them by hand after crapping out, others in the game have no opportunity to feel the weight difference between the straight and loaded dice. The eyes are always on the rolling dice, so the others do not see the con hide the second pair of dice in a side pocket. He easily switches the dice while the others are picking up their money or laying down fresh bets. While common, dice games were illegal in most states, so they were held in alleys and warehouses and garages, usually in areas that were not that well-lighted, because the players did not want a passing cop to see too much light. This made life easy for the traveling pro. Jim Thompson dealt with this lifestyle in **THE GRIFTERS**.

ANT SMOKERS IN BAHRAIN

Teenaged junkies in Bahrain are sniffing the fumes given off by ants when they are crushed and rolling up the little creatures into joints which they smoke. Are they getting high? Who knows, but the police are busting them anyway. You can even buy prepackaged ant. A small packet of Samaseem [Arabic for ants] goes for up to \$135 in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. The government says the young people are into ants because they can't afford higher priced narcotics like heroin and hashish.

CRUMB ON FILM

Terry Zwiegoff's film **CRUMB** was show at the Toronto Internatioal Film Festival in September of this year. I have not seen the film, but a still from it appeared in the San Francisco **BAY GUARDIAN** [9/21/94, p. 38].

For years brothels in the Bay Area have functioned under the cover of Massage Parlors. In Thailand, the place to get laid is a barber shop. It's true. I saw the clip on *Rough Guide*. Barber poles all over Bangkok. But in San Mateo, California, you go to a Tanning Salon. Police are keeping an eye on these *Spas*.

NAKED ANGEL

Gary Stephens accused Marin auxilliary volunteers of censorship when they had his naked angel removed from this year's Marin Designers Showcase. Some visitors were upset when they saw that the undressed angel appeared to have an aqua hard on. Gary claimed the aqua dong was hanging, not erect. Said he thought of it as a little Cupid-penis. The appendage, about an inch long and surrounded by a spiral of red, orange, and yellow pubic hairs, hung from a two-foot clay angel. Removed after five days because of complaints, the naked angel was rehung in the lobby of the ABC Broadcast Center on Front Street in San Francisco September 22 and 23 where folks could check it out. Mustn't offend that old money in Marin County. To understand the hypocrisy and the underlying humor in this, you have to know that a lot of the rich folks in Marin these days made their money off sex, drugs, and rock and roll in the sixties when public nudity was an everyday occurence.

Something had gone terribly wrong in the civilization of this country. The cars were bumper to bumper, going nowhere.

Tama Janowitz. **THE MALE CROSS-DRESSER SUPPORT GROUP**. New York: Crown, 1992.

The **WORDS AND PICTURES** Museum is moving to 140 Main Street, Northampton, MA [01060]. The grand opening is scheduled for December 31, 1994. Should be a memorable New Year's Eve party.

Sexist Quote of the Month

"you'd never want to let women actually get into power. All women are cunts, and you can't trust them."

-Gene Roddenberry.
Joel Engel
Gene Roddenberry
The Myth and the Man
Behind Star Trek
1994, p. 241.



Gunplay: Robert Crumb in Terry Zwiegoff's *Crumb*.

Why is there no underground fandom? How come no one picked up the torch and ran with it? Why are there science fiction conventions and comic conventions all over the country that ignore underground comix and characters?

FELIX REDUX

FELIX THE CAT: THE CARTOON MAKER, a CD-ROM, will be on sale by Thanksgiving from Big Top Productions. Now all you need is a couple of grand worth of computer equipment and your little kid can make up his or her own cartoon! Doncha love it? Felix started out as a cartoon character developed by Otto Messmer at Pat Sullivan's studio circa 1919. He was in the funny papers by 1923 and had a long run until 1967. Like Betty Boop, the little cat based on Charlie Chaplin and Kipling's **THE CAT THAT WALKED BY HIMSELF**, seems to have more than nine lives. There are pirate t-shirts and other items all over the place.

Max Traffic has teamed up with Steve Willis to write the **WHITE BUFFALO GAZETTE**. \$1 and a stamp to Steve for a sample. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.



COMIX WAVE 156. ©Clay Geerdes, 1994. All Rights reserved. POB 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707-0991. Logo from **Bob Harvey's** sketchbook. He went to most of the Summer cons and some of his caricatures appear in this issue.

I don't know whether to call it the Disneyfication of Marvel or the Marvelization of Disney, but Marvel just published the first issue of **THE DISNEY AFTERNOON**, reviving characters like Darkwing Duck, Talespin, and the Goof Troop. Never thought I would see such an unholy alliance.

Disneyland Fandom exists. **THE "E" TICKET** sells for \$6 [sample issue] from POB 800880, Santa Clarita, CA 91380-0880. A nice zine with nostalgic photos of Disney and his trains, interviews with folks like Ollie Johnson.

Gary Larson has tired of **THE FAR SIDE** and announced he will pack it in at the end of 1994. Larson, 44, says 15 years is enough. The final **FAR SIDE** panel will appear on January 1, 1995. Larson won the Reuben in 1991.

RAGGED DICK

"The Sexual Revolution...a world of sexual incompetents encountering each other under disco circumstances, now, can't you do songs about that?"

-Frank Zappa

RAGGED DICK was one of the novels of that famous pederast Horatio Alger, Jr., but today's plastic surgeons have given new meaning to the term as they perform in-office penile extension surgery on guys who want to make a better impression on their brothers in the shower at the Y or *The Club*. Yes, businessmen are sporting bigger dicks these days as their wives pump up their sagging tits

I'M NOT REALLY IN AUTOGRAPHS. I'M AND I'M NOT INTO COLLECTING THEM! I GOT ENOUGH TROUB PILING UP BOOKS!



I'M MOE!

with silicone injections and implants, but at what cost? Cancer has killed off a lot of the cosmetically-deceived women whose implants leaked into their tissues and it looks like the male MBA's of the nineties want to play catch-up with their hapless mates. The ads for this surgery run in the business section of the paper along with display ads for the new topless clubs that cater to guys in the lower echelon of management. [In these clubs, playmate clones come out in business drag and remove their suits and ties until they get down to the big boobs and aerobically smooth buns peculiar to male stroke books like *PLAYBOY* and *HUSTLER*. While you could get in and out of the topless clubs in San Francisco's North Beach in the sixties for less than \$20, these new fantasy sex parlors will relieve you of a hundred or more.]

So you want to have your dick lengthened? Thickened? You can have it done in about an hour and a half in a plastic surgeon's office, but a few of the risks include: nerve damage, impaired sensation, impotence, decreased penile stability during intercourse, a lowered angle of erection, unwanted protrusions of skin in the pubic area, unsightly scars, infection, gangrene and loss of tissue. Says Claudia Morain in an article in the San Francisco *CHRONICLE*: "In the thickening procedure, the surgeon uses liposuction to harvest fat from the patient's inner thigh, pubic area or hips. An ounce or two of processed fat is then injected with a four-inch needle down the length of the penile shaft. Patients are warned that the fat will be absorbed by the body over time, and that repeat injections may be needed within a year. Hazards include release of a fat globule, or embolus, into the bloodstream during liposuction. When an embolus lodges in the heart or brain, heart attack or stroke ensues. If the surgeon injects too much fat into the penis, the blood vessels that nourish the skin of the penis can be choked off, causing tissue death. Finally, the penis can end up lumpy, lopsided, bulbous or with the texture of a cobblestone street...most surgeons use limited anesthesia and perform the operations in their offices [10/3/94, p. E-7]."

Make an appointment now. Why should women suffer alone? Join the Equal Misery for Men Movement. Just think of this as a Public Service Announcement. 

Par Holman sent me a stat of the cover of the third issue of Harvey's new **TOM AND JERRY**. Tom and Jerry are looking up at the crotch of a cat dancer on the cover. Both have their tongues out. Reed Waller, take note.

Moe Moscovitz, founder and owner of Moe's Books in Berkeley appears in a story in **THE STRANGERS 14**.



Air line attendants working for Japan Air Lines were upset recently when they learned they would have to wear those idiot Mickey Mouse ears in flight. To beef up travel, JAL has licensed some Disney characters to be painted on the fusilages of their planes. Naturally, only the women will have to wear the ears originally designed for the Mouseketeers of the fifties. JAL thinks women with mouse ears will boost business and that the flight attendants who oppose wearing the ears are in the minority. Well, gee, little bunny costumes with ears and tails made big bucks for **PLAYBOY** back in the sixties, huh? Go for it, guys; there has always been big money in making women look ridiculous. Just to think about Mickey Mouse's smiling face on the plane makes me feel safer. And, after all, wasn't one of Mickey's earliest cartoons called **PLANE CRAZY**?

Tit Watch. I watched **THE GRADUATE** again last week. I've always been curious about that scene between Anne Bancroft and Dustin Hoffman in the hotel bedroom. Was she or wasn't she naked? Well, now it can be told that she *was* topless, but wore a pair of skin-colored panties. Not that you will see this on your video if you run the film at normal speed. I didn't. I stopped the tape and moved through the scene one frame at a time. Result? Anne Bancroft's tits in four frames at two different times. The eye does not register four frames, so no one who saw the film in a theater knew that Mike Nichols put those famous tits on film. Kind of makes you wonder what else is in some of these movies, huh? In one of my college psych classes, we were shown a film on subliminal persuasion. The technique used was simple; a tachistoscope flashed an image on the movie screen at various intervals. The message was **BUY POPCORN** or some soft drink, but it was onscreen for only a few frames, not long enough for the brain to relay it to consciousness. What the study did show, alas, was that people seeing this image *were* influenced by it. They bought more popcorn and soft drinks than a control group. Question is, what did those subliminal tits in **THE GRADUATE** do to the audience? Anyone editing a film can use this technique. In **BRENDA STARR**, there is a scene where Brenda [Brooke Shields] is climbing up out of the water and, uh-huh, her tits are onscreen for four or five seconds. In an era of blatant pornography, we must be on our guard against subliminal persuasion; some of those actors and actresses may have their clothes on for four or five seconds without our knowing it!

Well, I see by the paper they busted Clint Watson down in San Jose in mid-October. Clint is the genius who figured out a way to use a radio-wave scanner to capture the id numbers of cellular phone users who drove by his house. Clint replaced built-in identity chips in customers' cellular phones with his own new, specially programmed chips, all of which contained the id numbers he ripped off. He sold these life-time phones, called clones for \$1 to \$2 grand apiece. Ah, well, Clint, it was a helluva scam while it lasted. But relax, hell, after a couple of years in the joint, you can get a job lecturing at UCLA like Mike "junk bonds" Milken did. The old idea that crime does not pay only applies to the poor street criminal capable of one stick-up at a time. High level white collar crime pays better than ever. Look at all those Watergate guys who did a couple years in country club jails, fed and clothed by the government while they wrote the memoirs and novels that brought them millions after they got out.

SOAP SEX

Is your Mom sitting around the condo watching a lot of sleaze sex on the tube all afternoon? Michigan State Prof Brad Greenberg and his associates did a little survey of afternoon soap operas and after looking at 50 episodes, they counted 120 acts of extramarital sex and 36 acts of married sex. They counted 57 long kisses, and rape was discussed or occurred 71 times. 7 simple pettings. Tsk! The stuff our parents watch in their retirement years.

"Presumably having concluded that no jury in Los Angeles County, or probably anywhere else in the country, would, under any circumstances, order Simpson's execution, the District Attorney in effect conceded that neither the moral nor the civil law means much of anything when pitted against the heavier artillery of wealth, celebrity, and the fear of tomorrow's race riot."

Lewis Lapham
HARPER'S, November, 1994.

Never believe the hype. **PULP FICTION** is a pile of disgusting rot, a story about a lot of lowlife scumbags not worth filming, an exercise in contemporary amorality—Take the wife and kids! See tired out Travolta doing the twist. Watch the junkie burn-out follies as you listen to lots of racist trash talk. See newspaper hype praising this as a parody. Anyone can see that; it's what is embedded in the parody and taken for granted that disturbs me. One reviewer said the characters were so lovable he wanted to take them home with him. The guy probably has little stuffed dolls shaped like Jason and Freddy neatly arranged on his bed. We're talking about hired killers here, gang, the kind of people who would cut your throat for a nickel bag of smack. This loser gets the Blood Spattered Popcorn Award of 1994.

Why would I want to read a serious novel? ...a serious novel today is already too reactionary, by trying to reinterpret contemporary reality in verbal terms, making a verbal structure, no, no, no. To me, the rhythms of our thinking in the pop culture world, the domination by image, the whole way the images are put together, and so on, are way beyond the novel at this point. If a novelist does emerge now who is a product of pop culture and mass media, it is going to look quite different on the page. It won't necessarily look fragmented. I don't believe in that postmodernist thing of cutting things up. But the rhythms of it are going to be fast rhythms, and it's going to be surreal, flashing. -Camile Paglia, 1994.

Who is Tom Tomorrow?

Dan Perkins. He is featured in an article in the October 31, 1994, issue of *IN THESE TIMES*, a quasi-radical magazine for which Terry "Cud" Laban often does the editorial cartoons and spot illos. Perkins is 33 and is on the road hyping his book, *TUNE IN TOMORROW* [St. Martin's, 1994].

Also on the promo trail is Artie Spiegelman who has found a way to make comic art pay off. You do book books not comic books. Art has illustrated a reprinting of Joseph Moncure March's *THE WILD PARTY* [New York: Pantheon, 1994], originally published in 1928.

The premiere issue of Steve Willis' *NEWAVE READER* is \$2 from him. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. This is mainly a collection of articles which were published elsewhere, but my memoir about *COMIX WORLD* was done specifically for the *READER*. Jim Ryan's art for the cover of *COMIX WAVE* #1 is reprinted on the cover. I like this project. Hope to see it continue with some feedback from other people who participated in the mini adventure. The whole trip expanded all over the country and is bigger now than it ever was when a handful of us were drawing and publishing most of the books. I like to think we had something to do with inspiring the trend, but I think it had more to do with the availability of better and better copy machines. A lot of the local minis and DZs I see around were drawn and published by people working at local copy shops. Free access to the technology inspires a lot of art and poetry. A complete list of all the past and present zines would fill several volumes and be obsolete on publication since the new ones come out so fast.

The trials and tribulations of Florida cartoonist Michael Diana are detailed by Sean Henry in "Comic Threat," in the November issue of *MOTHER JONES*, pp 67 ff. Some of the drawings from *BOILED ANGEL*, the DZ that got him busted, tried, and sent to jail are described. In one "a child is sodomized by his adoptive father, who is killed by the family dog. The boy things he's finally free until the dog picks up where the dad left off." And you thought your comic fantasies were gross, huh?

Crime is everywhere. Especially around a large college campus like UC Berkeley, where people who don't jaywalk are the exception rather than the rule. A speeding skateboarder almost clips me on Durant. Cops ride their bicycles on the sidewalk, though they are not chasing criminals, just cycling over to Yogurt Park to loaf for half an hour before they cycle up to Noah's Bagels to loaf for another half an hour. Bicyclists are arrogant in Berkeley, making snotty remarks about people who drive cars, while ignoring all the traffic laws, running stop signs, going the wrong way on one way streets just like Whoopi Goldberg in *MADE IN AMERICA*, but there is poetic justice; the most common and frequent crime in Berkeley is bicycle theft. A woman on a moped passes on the inside next to the curb on a crowded corner at Shattuck and University, nearly running over my foot. Mopeds move up between cars to get

the jump on people waiting at the intersection. Who reads the Driver's manual these days? Speed limits are ignored all over town. A seasoned Berkeley driver always waits a few seconds after the green light because two or three people routinely run the red. People make sudden U-turns across a double-yellow line to steal a parking place from someone who obeyed the law and drove around the block. Exhaust fumes assault me from cars I am sure passed no legal smog check. Loud mufflers and ghettoblasters attack my ears, violating the decibel level. Political signs are posted on street and stop signs all along Sacramento, one of Berkeley's main thoroughfares. There is graffiti everywhere. Property is routinely defaced. The local buses have hard plastic seats now because the comfortable seats were slip with knives and the packing pulled out. The buses now have video cameras on passengers at all times, not to prevent crime but to identify the criminals after it is too late. Someone is robbed or assaulted every five minutes in this area and someone is murdered every other day. We used to shop at a small grocery store that sold organic food over on Cedar and King, then the owner was stabbed to death over a parking place and the store closed soon afterward because the family did not know how to sustain the business. A local paper, *THE BERKELEY VOICE*, lists half a page of armed robberies and assaults each week taken from the police blotter. Many people are afraid to walk in their own neighborhoods at night. A friend of mind was pistol whipped and robbed as he got out of his car to open his garage door one evening. He wasn't even given a chance to hand over his wallet, just hit in the head with a gun. Twenty stitches at the emergency room. Because theft is constant, most restaurants serve food in disposable containers and give out small packets of condiments. I used to go to Kip's when there was a salt and pepper shaker, a sugar container, and an ash tray on each table. Such things are nostalgia now.

Why am I mixing trivial crimes with those considered serious? Because a community of people that ignores laws that are made for the protection of themselves and others creates a climate in which all kinds of crime become acceptable. A bicyclist ran a red light on Durant and Dana one afternoon, going the wrong way on a one-way street and he ran into me in the crosswalk. I was knocked to the sidewalk and injured. I got up very angry and yelled at him about violating the law and being careless. He listened a moment, then rode off toward the campus. He didn't apologize. He didn't care. He was no different than the person who hit my friend in the head with a gun and took his money. Both got away with their crimes. Nothing was done to them. The social order has broken down. Rudeness, arrogance, amorality, and anti-social behavior are the norm and I have become an anachronism in my own town.

Rob Huizenga was team internist for the Los Angeles Raiders back in 1983. He confirms that all the things you suspected about those professional football players is true. *YOU'RE OK, IT'S JUST A BRUISE* [New York: St. Martin's, 1994] reveals what it's like in the Raiders' dressing room after the media people have gone home. Drugs, steroids, and go on playing or kiss your career goodbye. Nice portrait of Lyle Alzado.



Clay Geerdes *COMIX WAVE* 157
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COMIX PLUGOLA

For a 52¢ stamp you get a copy of Gary Usher's collection of the work of Al Stahl. Stahl did *FLATFOOT BURNS* for Quality in the 1940s. 205 N. Vine St., Glenwood, IA 51534.

Leonard Nimoy's *PRIMORTALS* comes out this December from Tekno-Comix. I missed seeing Nimoy, Takei and Nichols in *STAR TREK GENERATIONS*. Future trivia games will ask who killed Captain Kirk. That would be Soren, the villain played by Malcolm McDowell. After seeing what he did in *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, I always knew McDowell would come to no good end. As for Shatner. Come off it. Drop that shitty attitude toward the character that made your fame and fortune. Like it or not, history will remember James T. Kirk as one of the great television characters of the late sixties; the rest of your acting career might as well not have happened.

Steve Lafler's *BUGHOUSE* 2 is out. \$3.25 from Cat-Head Comics, POB 576, Hudson, MA 01749.

Dan Clowes reveals what he really thinks about sports like football and baseball in *EIGHT BALL* 14.

Pete Bagge goes into color in *HATE* 16, but, fear not, his characters remain as acerbic and disagreeable as ever. Every time I read about these people, I feel relieved that I don't know or have to associate with them or anyone like them.

Yesterday, I saw a 15-year-old girl sitting outside Rasputin's glass record store on Durant. She was begging for money. She had little silver rings in her eyebrows, her nose, her ears, and probably other parts of her body that were not visible. How can I relate to a generation of kids that views this kind of mutilation as a rite of passage? There is a piercing parlor on Telegraph now and when I pass there are people in leather clothing standing around in front with shaved heads and pierced-up faces. Some of them wear rhinestone studs in their tongues! The Rolling Stones did several shows here last weekend and I can imagine the reaction of Mick Jagger and his band of old hippies as they looked down across those shiny bald heads and sang about Sweet Sister Cocaine.

NON-COMIC BOOKS

How do I know there are people who do horoscopes for horses? Vicki Hearne says so in *ANIMAL HAPPINESS* [New York: Harper, 1994]. She adopted Peppy the Wonder Horse, who, it turns out, was an Aquarian.

The new Lord of the Flies? That would have to be Robert Friedel who has just published a history called *ZIPPER* [New York: Norton, 1984].

For the latest on the LSD revival of the early nineties, check out Leigh Henderson and William Glass' *LSD: STILL WITH US AFTER ALL THESE YEARS*. [New York: Lexington, 1994]. LSD, as you recall was a gift from the good old CIA who gave it away free as part of a program known as MK-ULTRA. Our friendly government agents were trying to find an effective means of crowd control. When they discovered that people high on acid just didn't give a shit one way or the other, they scrapped the drug. Curiously, it became illegal in October of 1966 and people who continued to go on weekend trips were harassed and turned into criminals. The Henderson-Glass text is somewhat pharmacological, but interesting.

Are they still poisoning our body fluids as we learned back in DR. STRANGELOVE? Douglas Rushkoff thinks so. See his *MEDIA VIRUS: HIDDEN AGENDAS IN POPULAR CULTURE*. [New York: Ballantine, 1994]. Rushkoff thinks there is more to tv than you think you see. Well, we've known that since the days of *THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS* and *SUBLIMINAL PERSUASION*, but Rushkoff updates everything.

Barry Sanders doesn't think anyone wants to learn to read these days, particularly young black students. A IS FOR OX: VIOLENCE, ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE SILENCING OF THE WRITTEN WORD has all the details about the decline of literacy in urban high schools. [New York: Pantheon, 1994].

And how do gang members really think? Sanyika Skakur tells all in his *MONSTER: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN L.A. GANG MEMBER* [New York: Penguin, 1993]. Monster was Shakur's nickname in the gang. While we're on the subject, Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters have published *MAKING*

MONSTERS: FALSE MEMORIES, PSYCHOTHERAPY, AND SEXUAL HYSTERIA [New York: Scribner's, 1994]. False memory syndrome means you may not remember your childhood experiences clearly and if you do you may not remember them correctly, hence you need a therapist to hypnotise you and lead you through the dark bedrooms and barns of yesteryear in search of a bogeyman who might have been your Dad or a favorite uncle or even your Mom! Lo and behold, people in their thirties and forties who can afford a hundred or a hundred and fifty bucks an hour suddenly remember being molested by their parents. For some more hundreds, revenge is near at hand; the offending parent can be sued. Entire families can be destroyed and disgraced as FMS victims make the rounds of the talk show circuit. Well, lots of people have been molested as children, but I've yet to meet anyone who forgot or repressed it; I'm sixty and the people I've talked to about the subject remember every little detail and are skeptical about those who suddenly claim Daddy molested them thirty or forty years after the fact. Ofshe and Watters interview victims and therapists and offer chapter and verse re a subject that needs to be discussed within the family.

Question is where the hell did all these Angels come from? We have Angels in San Francisco and ANGELS IN THE OUTFIELD remade by Disney and now ANGELIC HEALING. Yep. Eileen Elias Freeman saw an Angel in her room after a long operation and it changed her life. She subtitled her book *WORKING WITH YOUR ANGELS TO HEAL YOUR LIFE* [New York: Time Warner, 1994]. Ms. Freeman is head of the AngelWatch Foundation and publishes a newsletter four times a year.

How do I know there are surgeons who have been experimentally transplanting animal organs into humans? Deborah Blum tells all about it in *THE MONKEY WARS* [New York: Oxford, 1994]. Blum discusses the complex conflict between animal research and animal rights activism, noting the way contemporary research is funded by grants which would be taken away if the animals were freed from their cages.

SMITHSONIAN REVISES HISTORY OF MAD

I just had an interesting run in with the SMITHSONIAN magazine. They ran an article about Jack Kamen's son, Dean, in the November 1994 issue¹ and all the information about Jack Kamen was wrong [see p. 106] so I wrote and told them so. The article said Jack Kamen was one of the first people hired by MAD and he was never hired by MAD. He sold to EC, but was not on staff. I got a letter back saying they would stick by their story, in other words, I WAS WRONG. Looks like someone in the Kamen family is trying to revise the history of MAD by claiming that Jack was one of the first people hired! Jack's wife, Evelyn Kamen, told SMITHSONIAN he did the prototype for MAD.² Said he worked on an EC comic called CREEPSHOW. There is no such title, so I xeroxed the truth and sent it to the mag along with a follow-up letter. Kamen at MAD. Gaines didn't even

mention him in the 1972 MAD WORLD OF WILLIAM M. GAINES, because Kamen never did anything for MAD. He freelanced pre-Code love and horror stories.³ SMITHSONIAN could have checked this out in Maria Reidelbach's COMPLETELY MAD [Boston: Little, Brown, 1991] or any of several dozen sources, but what did the editor do? She called Kamen's wife! Why would Evelyn Kamen remember what her husband did over forty years ago? So much for research at that magazine. I told the editor who sent me that insulting letter I thought it was an insult to an artist to try to associate him with something he didn't do and deny what he did do.⁴ I liked Kamen's stuff in the horror comics. The article even said there were some originals from the EC comics on the wall in Kamen's house. How could that be when Gaines kept all that art in his vault and Cochran has it now. No EC originals were ever returned to the artists, according to Kurtzman, so it is likely the Kamen originals are from something rejected by EC or done for another company that did return original art.

What's the point? If we are going to keep track of the history of comic art and the people who drew it, and to me this is just as valid an endeavor as keeping records on the writers of popular novels or poems, then accuracy is important and error has to be corrected, particularly when it appears in magazines that have the social prestige of the SMITHSONIAN. C.G.

¹Steve Kemper, "Technology is Fun--and Can Make you lots of money." SMITHSONIAN, November, 1994, pp 98-111.

²Harvey Kurtzman did the prototype for MAD and he worked with Bill Elder, Jack Davis, Wally Wood, John Severin, and a few other EC regulars; Jack Kamen was not one of them. I don't know why, but have an idea Kamen lacked the flair for the type of humor Kurtzman was into. I met Kurtzman in 1976 when I brought him to Berkeley to guest at my Underground '76 convention at UC and we corresponded often until his death in 1993. None of his letters mention Kamen, nor did he mention him in his biography, MY LIFE AS A CARTOONIST or in his Visual History of the Comics, FROM AARGH TO ZAP.

³See TALES FROM THE CRYPT 31 for a story about Kamen, illustrated by himself. Gaines and Feldstein allude to the love and horror comics, not to MAD, because Kamen had nothing to do with the humor mag Kurtzman was working on in 1952.

⁴The associate editor who wrote to me had the gall to include a dictionary definition of a pulp magazine in her letter as though I didn't know what I was talking about, while she, clearly, did not know that the adventure comic magazines evolved out of pulp magazines in the mid-thirties, and that saddle-stapled comic magazines were not pulp magazines.

Yes, THE JOE BOB REPORT, that regular compendium of the best of the worst in drive-in horror films, continues into 1995. A sample from the man himself at POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. \$3.